



**CHICAGO HEIGHTS BOULEVARD SITE
COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP – Questions and Comments
March 7, 2013**

HEALTH CONCERNS

Q: If our health is safe why and where are these emails coming from?

A: EPA is aware that some residents of the Elmwood Park area may have received email messages from private law firms or companies seeking to provide legal services or do other types of business with local residents. However, it is important for you to know that EPA is not involved with those messages in any way. Any form of printable communication that you might receive from EPA Region 7—particularly any email message, fact sheet, meeting flyer, brochure or other printed material that you might receive—will be clearly marked as coming from EPA. EPA's materials often include an official agency seal, and will typically include an EPA staff member's name and contact information so that you can verify that what you are reading is legitimate. If you have any doubt whether an email or other form of communication was actually sent to you by EPA, contact EPA Region 7 Community Involvement Coordinator Belinda Young at 1-800-223-0425 or young.belinda@epa.gov

Q: Do we need blood tests? At whose expense?

A: If you have recently been exposed to trichloroethylene (TCE), it can be detected in your breath, blood, or urine. The breath test, if it is performed soon after exposure, can tell if you have been exposed to even a small amount of TCE. Exposure to larger amounts is assessed by blood and urine tests, which can detect TCE and many of its breakdown products for up to a week after exposure. However, exposure to other similar chemicals can produce the same breakdown products, so their detection is not absolute proof of exposure to TCE. This test isn't available at most doctors' offices, but can be done at special laboratories that have the right equipment.

Q: Per Agency for Toxic substance website says: Breathing small amounts TCE can cause headaches, lung irritation, etc. Breathing large amounts TCE can cause impaired

heart function, death, nerve, liver, kidney damage. Drinking large amounts TCE can cause liver damage, death, impaired heart function etc. Drinking small amounts TCE can cause lupus, liver, kidney damage and death. People exposed to TCE over long periods of time have found increased cancer risk. You are saying this TCE does not affect the entire community and it is safe to drink the water. Based on www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs. The entire community's homes should be tested and/or offered a (buyout). The illnesses listed above have touched every block in Elmwood Park, from Zimmermann, Chicago Hts to Elmridge. But you are only testing a few houses. The alarmingly high sickness rate of heart problems, cancer, lupus, liver, kidney damage, miscarriage, stillborn and mental issues is a great concern to the community at large. I would like to know why a buyout is not offered to residents who would like to move for health reasons. The ATSDR is being asked to look at these stats and advise are we living in "A Cancer Cluster and or Sick Bed?" The community would be happy to share the stats we have so far. The numbers are increasing daily.

A: In Missouri, cancer inquiries are handled by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. For more information, please contact:

Bureau of Cancer and Chronic Disease Control
Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
PO Box 570
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0570
Telephone: (573) 522-2845
Fax: (573) 522-2899
Email: info@dhss.mo.gov

Residents of Elmwood Park can be assured that the drinking water that comes from their taps is provided by a public water system that is separate from the groundwater and subject to regular testing to ensure it is safe for consumption and use.

PROPERTY CONCERNS

Q: I am trying to relocate and sell two houses in Elmwood. I need a disclosure statement showing my properties are not affected. The EPA told me my homes were not affected at this time. My Realtor advised me to seek a buyout because my homes could not be sold without disclosing the chemical and toxic waste.

A: EPA cannot provide legal advice as to real estate disclosure requirements, which are covered by Missouri state law. Your attorney or real estate agent should advise you on those issues. However, EPA can provide to anyone, upon request, a letter detailing the status of a particular property with regard to the known location(s) of contamination.

This type of letter, known as a “comfort letter,” is intended to provide some degree of certainty to property owners and potential purchasers regarding liability with regard to a property. While EPA understands that innocent property owners may suffer damages from the presence of contamination in the local environment, EPA has no legal authority to compensate property owners for those damages. To request a “comfort letter” for a property in Elmwood Park, contact David Hoefer of EPA Region 7’s Office of Regional Counsel at 913-551-7503 or hoefer.david@epa.gov

Q: What is the process to demand property buyout for the whole community?

A: Currently there are no provisions for property buyouts or relocations associated with this site. Such opportunities are generally unavailable to residents living on or near environmentally contaminated groundwater sites as exposures to contaminated groundwater can generally be readily addressed through relatively simple and inexpensive engineered controls, such as the mitigation systems that have been installed in many residences in the Elmwood Park community, and other means. By addressing the exposures, residents can remain in their homes and communities are kept intact. Generally, the primary reasons for conducting a permanent relocation would be to address an immediate risk to human health (where an engineered solution is not readily available) or where the structures (such as homes or businesses) are an impediment to implementing a cleanup. Neither of those circumstances exists with regard to this site.

Q: Our property values are down but our taxes are up. Which agency can pay or abate our taxes, or can Perkin Elmer pay or abate our taxes since we have basically lost our homes’ value/ worth due to these chemicals? Who can we contact to protect our rights?

A: The valuation and taxation of real property is not controlled by EPA, but rather by state and local governments. You should contact your local assessor’s office with questions about tax abatements or changes to the assessed valuation of your property.

Q: Will this depreciate our property value? Will we be able to sell?

A: EPA recognizes that even unfounded speculation about environmental contamination can have negative impacts on real property values. This is, unfortunately, a frequently occurring consequence of environmental contamination on or near many residential properties across the United States. However, over time, EPA’s successful implementation of cleanup strategies at these sites can, in addition to protecting human

health and the environment, actually have positive impacts on property values and allow communities to remain intact.

Q: What are the criteria for communities in contaminated areas to be bought out? (Such as for areas like Times Beach, etc.) Why is our community any different than those? We are ill, our children are ill; our loved ones are dying at alarmingly high rates.

A: EPA's long-held policy, through its Superfund process, is a preference to address risks posed by contamination by using well-designed methods of cleanup which allow people to remain safely in their homes. Vapor intrusion, which has been found in some of the homes of Elmwood Park, can be reliably and effectively mitigated through the installation and operation of vapor mitigation systems. These systems have been—and where needed, will be—installed at no cost to homeowners or occupants of Elmwood Park. Monitoring of these systems to ensure they remain effective is also provided at no cost. These systems allow residents to live without unacceptable exposures in their homes. As a result, there is no need for anyone in Elmwood Park to relocate based on health concerns.

Comment: If the buyout is not feasible, the community should be compensated.

EPA Response: EPA does not have the legal authority to provide, or require others to provide, compensation for damages that property owners or other individuals believe they may have incurred because of environmental contamination. Persons who believe they are entitled to such compensation are free to seek private legal advice and pursue their own legal actions.

OTHER SITE QUESTIONS

Q: What is the name of the company/contractor responsible for cleanup?

A: PerkinElmer, Inc. (PerkinElmer) is responsible for conducting the investigation and response pursuant to an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent that it entered into with EPA in November 2012. While PerkinElmer did not cause the contamination, under the federal Superfund law it is responsible as it owns the facility where the contamination is coming from (9970 Page Boulevard). A copy of the Order is available from EPA and is also posted on EPA's website. Burns & McDonnell, an engineering and environmental firm, is PerkinElmer's primary contractor for the performance of the work required by the Order.

Q: What is PerkinElmer, Inc.'s relationship with PerkinElmer EGG? Do they have Board of Directors on staff at any of the companies?

A: PerkinElmer is the corporate successor to EGG. EG&G purchased the assets of Missouri Metal Shaping Company, including the property located at 9970 Page Boulevard, from Alco Standard Corporation in 1988. It is believed that the contamination at this location occurred while Missouri Metal Shaping Company operated there.

Q: Who do I contact to have my home tested? At whose expense?

A: PerkinElmer, at EPA's direction and with EPA's oversight, will continue to test homes that may be at risk for vapor intrusion based on data. The tests performed by PerkinElmer and their contractor are at no cost to the residents. If residents who live beyond the portion of the neighborhood currently thought to be at risk wish to test their homes at their own expense, they can contact their own environmental contractor to make such arrangements. EPA, however, is prohibited from recommending any particular contractor to provide such services.

Q: What are the results of the homes that have been tested?

A: Results of sampling at individual properties have been shared privately with the owners and occupants of those properties. Because of privacy laws, EPA cannot make these results publicly available, but the owners and occupants of those properties may choose to share it with whomever they wish, if they desire to do so.

Q: Why are all the mitigation systems installed on Housing Authority Property and private homeowners are told "you have the chemical but live with it"?

A: Ownership of each property has nothing to do with whether or not it has been tested or had a mitigation system installed. EPA's decisions for testing and installation of mitigation systems are based solely on the available sampling data. EPA has never told private homeowners that they have to live with unsafe levels of contaminants.

Q: The EPA says PerkinElmer is paying to correct the problem. Why can't private homeowners request that their homes be tested? This testing process is not geared to test private homeowners. Only the homes owned by the St. Louis County Housing Authority are getting the mitigation systems.

A: Ownership of each property has nothing to do with whether or not it has been tested or had a mitigation system installed. EPA's decisions for testing and installation of mitigation systems are based solely on the available sampling data. If residents outside the portion of the neighborhood currently thought to be at risk wish to test their homes, they can contact an environmental contractor to do the testing at the resident's expense.

Q: When will all the homes and apartments east of Dielman Road be tested for TCE?

A: Based on the currently available sampling data, homes east of Dielman Road are not at risk from the site contaminants. The homes east of Dielman are not currently planned for testing. If additional data gathered in the future suggests that these homes were at risk, testing of the at-risk homes would be scheduled.

Q: I live in the apartments. What is being done to help me since I have been affected by TCE?

A: EPA's decisions for testing and installation of mitigation systems are based solely on the available sample data, not on whether a particular residence is a single-family home or an apartment building. Apartment buildings as well as single-family homes have been tested and have had mitigation systems installed when test results indicated unacceptable risks to occupants. Apartment residents and single-family home residents are treated equally when it comes to conducting tests and installing mitigation systems.

Q: I would like the ground soil report explained in easy to understand (language).

A: EPA is always available to help residents understand any documents or issues related to the site contaminants in the neighborhood. Feel free to ask an EPA representative at any public meeting, or contact one of the following EPA representatives:

- Belinda Young, Community Involvement Coordinator, 1-800-223-0425; young.belinda@epa.gov.
- John Frey, Project Co-coordinator, 913-551-7994; frey.john@epa.gov.
- Dan Gravatt, Project Co-coordinator, 913-551-7324; gravatt.dan@epa.gov

Q: Did the Community Advisory Group (CAG) or Elmwood Park receive any environmental justice grants in 2012 or 2013? If so, when and what was done with the grant?

A: The CAG/Elmwood Park community did not submit an application to receive an Environmental Justice Small Grant (EJSG) for fiscal year 2012 or 2013.

Q: Will the opportunity become available for the Community Advisory Group to receive small grants to assist homeowners with privately testing their homes?

A: The Environmental Justice Small Grant program provides funding for eligible applicants to support activities designed to empower and educate communities to understand environmental and public health issues (i.e. exposure to air toxics and lead, farm worker and residential exposure to pesticides, youth involvement in education, etc.) and to identify ways to address these issues at the local level. Applicants must demonstrate that a project will carry out eligible activities under the EJSG Request for Applications (RFA) announcement. Whether or not a grant could specifically assist Elmwood Park property owners with funds to privately test their homes would depend on the specific guidelines that are issued when the EJSG program's Request for Applications is announced, which is on an annual basis. You can get more information on EPA's EJSG process at <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/grants/index.html> or you may contact Pamela Johnson at 913-551-7480 or by e-mail at Johnson.pamelak@epa.gov